LITERARY NEWS, VIEWS AND CRITICISM

EMPORIA'S AUTHOR CONSIDERS NEW YORK

Thoughts Inspired in William Allen White by a Woman and a Taxi.

NO BEAUTY HERE, HE SIGHS

He Drops the Initiative and Referendum to Point Out the Needs of the City Woman.

William Allen White, fair, fat and forty, flitted into town a day or so ago on his way to Boston, where he is scheduled to tell the Harvard League and a few other clubs all about the initiative and referendum. When he gets through with them up there he is coming back to New York, where he is to address the Chamber of Commerce and a few other organizations on the same subject. And when he gets through here he is going on to Washington with the same purpose. On his eastward trip he pursued the same mission as in various middle Western cities, and so he has left much enlightenment in his wake.

In view of all of which one might be led to suppose that the distinguished citizen of Emporia is out on an educational lecture tour, or a political tour, mayhap. But, oh, dear, no! He is out only for recreation. He has been having some real work to do out there in the *Gazette* office, what with finishing his new book and supervising the affairs of the town, county, State and nation; so his wife sent him forth to work the glass out of his literary arm. From his radiant appearance one wonders what he would be like when not on a health journey.

He looked particularly happy when he was caught in the reading room of his hotel shortly before he flitted away to Boston. He had just finished breakfast—an extra, preliminary to the four-meal-a-day schedule. When asked to make a few remarks about any of the world issues of the day he held up his arm and for a moment looked intently at his sleeve. It was as though he was considering which he should pull out of the many strings concealed up there.

"Your new book? The initiative and referendum?" tentatively suggested the visitor.

"Blanco Bill," or, as his friends are now disposed to call him, "Banquet Bill," shifted his arm so as to clasp the back of his head with his hand. He did it rather carefully, so it may be really true about the glass arm. Then he shook his head.

"Those last two waffles have lodged right up here," he said mournfully, indicating a portion of his cerebral anatomy. He walked to the window and stared reflectively out on the street. Suddenly his glance pricked up.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "What's that?"

The visitor rushed forward.

"What is it?" he asked. "I don't see anything but that woman getting out of a taxicab."

"A woman!" moaned the Emporian. "Is that a woman? Good heavens!"

He regained his calm presently, and found his voice again. But he would have nothing to do with the strings up his sleeve. His text had been thrust upon him from without, providentially, as 'twere.

"There are no handsome women in New York," he said. "I very much doubt if there were any really handsome women in Babylon; and I know I did not see any in Paris.

"Steam heated apartments, street cars and automobiles that atrophy their legs, and too many generations from the washtub spoil real beauty in women. There is nothing so ugly or so dangerous to society as idle women.

"The hotels and apartment houses of New York are filled with sleek, well groomed, well fed, childless women who give society no social or economic return for their board and keep; and in spite of all their attempts to be attractive in a purely feminine way, in spite of all their fine feathers, they are not very fine birds. They are too artificial, too obviously attractive, and overplay their hands—all because they have nothing to do for a living.

"The beautiful women of America are those living in the country and the country towns. They have something to do; their houses to keep, their children to take care of, their gardens to make, thousands of fresh air duties that keep their minds occupied and keep them from considering the vagaries of their innards.

"When a woman has nothing to do she begins the first thing to speculate on what ailment she has. While the life of her husband is divided into thirty and sixty and ninety day periods of standing before the bank window to get his notes renewed the life of his wife and all idle women is divided into periods of going in and coming out of the hospital and bragging about it.

"The net result of woman suffrage, if it has any net result, will be to give women some interest in life, to take their minds off themselves and to bring back the natural beauty God put into their hearts and had intended to have reflect in their faces. If the suffrage movement, which seems to be spreading over the country at a lively gait, does nothing more than to wake women to social service and usefulness and to restore the beauty that is now frittered away in inanity, woman suffrage will accomplish something."

Mr. White pas ed a moment to take breath, and while he was rounding a turn in his caged-lionwise pacing up and down the little hotel parlor, the visitor rushed in a question.

"Are you a woman suffragist, Mr. White?"

"Am I a woman suffragist? Why, you ought to see me rounding up the women in Emporia and getting them out to vote at the municipal elections. I hitch Black Tom up to the surrey and we all put in a busy day. Mrs. White sees to that.

"I left Mrs. White in Kansas City attending some kind of meeting or other which was being addressed by Mrs. Governor Stubbs and Mrs. Chief Justice Johnson. That is the way the ladies were introduced, and the Kansas City *Star*, being my very good friend, took exception because my wife when she was introduced to make her speech was not put forth as 'Mrs. Author White.'

"Yes, suffrage is being submitted in Kansas as it is being submitted in Oregon and Wisconsin," went on the Emporian, warming to his theme and resuming his pacing.

"When I was in Ohio last week it seemed likely there that it would be put in the new constitutional convention and be submitted to the people. The proposition is reasonably sure to carry in Kansas and in Oregon, but there is some doubt about the German element in Wisconsin, and an even chance in Ohio.

"Suffrage probably will not improve political conditions. It has been the history of the suffrage States in the far West that the women vote pretty much as the men except on strictly moral issues and those that directly affect the home. But the great thing that woman suffrage may be expected to do is not for the State, but for the women themselves.

"As for its taking them out of their homes, it is not more brutalizing than bridge whist or the highly immoral oyster stew church social, which teaches women to make something for nothing and take pay for it. But suffrage may give an added interest in life, may get into the homes and connect lives up with the big fundamental movements of democracy.

"If it does this thing suffrage will add greatly to the beauty of American women, because it will put something into their heads besides hatpins and something in their faces that didn't come from the drug store. Beauty is essentially from the heart. No joke in the world is so funny as is the woman who tries to make herself beautiful by external means."

AUTHORS AND THEIR WORK.

Henryk Sienkiewicz, whose newest novel, "In Desert and Wilderness," has just been translated from the original Polish by Max A. Dreymal and published by Little, Brown & Co., has lately been writing with much less frequency than during his early literary career. It is now nineteen years since Sienkiewicz wrote "Quo Vadis," which has sold nearly a million copies and after which he wrote a dozen other novels. He was awarded the Nobel literary prize in 1905.

Miss Annie S. Peck, the mountain climber, has just returned from South America, having added a new peak, Mount Coropuna, Peru, to the list of those which she has ascended. Miss Peck set up a flag with the inscription "Votes for Women" upon it, at an elevation of 21,000 feet.

The National Institute of Arts and Letters, at its meeting in Philadelphia, awarded its gold medal for distinguished work to James Whitcomb Riley, this being the first time the medal has gone to a poet. The medal is of gold, about two inches in diameter and a quarter of an inch in thickness. It was designed by Adolph Weinman, a member of the Institute, and shows a Greek head in relief on one side, while the reverse bears a lighted lamp of ancient pattern, and an inscription.

Kate Langley Bosher has admitted that the Yorkburg of her books, "Mary Carey" and "Miss Gibbie Gault," is in reality the former capital of Virginia. The orphan asylum which figures in both stories is based upon an institution in another city, and Mary Carey herself had her prototype in a child of Mrs. Bosher's acquaintance.

Zane Grey, the Mormon heroine of whose latest novel, "Riders of the Purple Sage," is a model of bravery, has had plenty of such women among his own ancestresses. One Betty Zane carried gunpowder in her apron for the besiegers at Fort Henry in 1782; another, the daughter of a Wyandotte Indian chief, rescued Isaac Zane from the captivity in which he was held by her father and subsequently married him.

A. Maurice Low, author of "The American People," will be the Bromley lecturer at Yale University this year, the first Englishman to be selected to deliver these lectures. Among others who have lectured in the course are Ambassador Whitelaw Reid and Col. George Harvey, editor of *Harper's Weekly*. The lectureship was endowed in 1900 by Mrs. Isaac H. Bromley as a memorial of her husband, a member of the class of 1853, and includes lectures on journalism, literature and public affairs.

Charles Norman Fay, author of "Big Business and Government," is a graduate of Harvard University and has all his life since his graduation been active in so-called "big business." He started work in a bank in Michigan and was summoned from there to Chicago to become the head executive of the Chicago Bell Telephone Company, which under Mr. Fay's management was for many years the largest company of its kind in the world. After his withdrawal from this company Mr. Fay was president of the Chicago Gas Trust and also of the Chicago Arc Light Consolidation until its merger with the Edison Company. Subsequently he was engaged in the business of manufacturing typewriters, and he financed the natural gas company which brought gas from Indiana to Chicago.

Miss Lilian Whiting, whose latest book is "The Brownings: Their Life and Art," will be the guest of honor at this month's meeting of the New York Browning Society. She has just received an invitation from the managers of the Browning centenary celebration to join the committee of fifty representative men and women for the meeting to be held in London at Westminster Abbey, on centenary day, May 7. Lord Crewe will preside and among the speakers will be the Archbishop of Canterbury, Prof. Edward Dowden, Sir Oliver Lodge, Arthur C. Benson, William Watson and the Bishop of Ripon.

"Hugh Gordon," who under this name has written "The Blind Road," a novel of married life, is a magazine editor and contributor and has had several novels published. The non de plume is used in the new book on account of the intimate treatment of the subject and the desire to avoid any controversy regarding the characters.

William H. Rideing, whose book of reminiscences "Many Celebrities and a Few Others" is announced, was for eight years managing editor of the *North American Review* and for thirty years the provider of the star features of the *Youth's Companion*. Several chapters of his book are devoted to literary life in London, New York and Boston.

Mary Gaunt in "Alone in West Africa," just published in this country by the Scribners, has recorded the events of an actual journey which she made alone. She started overland along the Gold Coast with the object of writing a book on the mediæval forts that line that coast, and having thoroughly covered them she turned inland by canoe up the Volta River, and thence by paths that only one white man and no white woman ever traversed before she crossed the hilly country into the German territory of Togo.

She visited the sleeping sickness camp at Mount Klutow, made her way to Lome, the capital, and thence overland again to Keta, in British territory. She then visited Ashanti, and journeyed to Sunyani, the heart of the rubber forest, through a country which ten years ago was peopled only by savages in revolt against British rule, but which now she declares is one of the richest possessions of the British Crown.

Rudolph Eucken, whose book "The Problem of Human Life" has just gone into a new and cheaper edition, is a philosopher well known in Germany. Born in East Friesland in 1846, he was the son of a woman of deep religious experience and he became absorbed in religion while still a boy. This interest increased with his classical and philosophical training. In 1871 he was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Basel; in 1874 he succeeded Kuno Fischer at Jena, and notwithstanding several calls to larger universities it is in the "little nest" of Goethe and Schiller that he has chosen to remain. In 1908 Prof. Eucken was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. His books have been translated into many European languages.

POWER OF DICKENS OVER OTHER WRITERS

British Authors Tell of Their Indebtedness to His Books.

BERNARD SHAW'S TRIBUTE

Andrew Lang an Exception—Who Buys Dickens's Books Now? He Asks.

A symposium of personal recollections of Dickens by present day British writers, and of confessions of his influence on their work, has just been conducted by the London *Bookman*. George Bernard Shaw says that obviously he has come greatly under the influence of Dickens.

"My works are all over Dickens," he avows, "and nothing but the stupendous illiteracy of modern criticism could have missed this glaring feature of my methods—especially my continual exploitation of Dickens's demonstration that it is possible to combine a mirrorlike exactness of character drawing with the wildest extravagances of humorous expression and grotesque situation.

"I have actually transferred characters of Dickens to my plays—Jaggers in 'Great Expectations' to 'You Never Can Tell,' for example—with complete success. Lomax in 'Major Barbara' is technically a piece of pure Dickens.

"It is not too much to say that Dickens not only could draw a character more accurately than any of the other novelists of the nineteenth century, but could do it without ceasing for a single sentence to be not merely impossible but outrageous in his unrestrained fantasy and fertility of imagination. That is what I call mastery; knowing exactly how to be unerringly true and serious while entertaining your reader with every trick and sally that imagination and humor can conceive at their freest and wildest."

William De Morgan believes that he owes Dickens everything.

"Unhappily, I have no personal recollections," he says. "I wish it were otherwise. In my opinion I owe Charles everything that a pupil can owe to his master—to his head master.

"Whether I have succeeded in rising above mere imitation is a point I leave to my readers. My own memory of Charles Dickens is simply one of unmixed gratitude and plenary acknowledgment of obligation."

William J. Locke, on the other hand, although he admits the greatness of Dickens, does not see in his own work any trace of direct influence.

"For a writer," he says, "to gauge the influence that another writer has had on his work is an exceedingly difficult matter unless he boldly and avowedly imitates his hero or unless it is a question of mere tricks of style, and for one who holds that color in all forms of art should be clear and not muddy, to say what he owes to such a crystal clear colorist as Dickens is more difficult still.

"I can, however, safely state that I have never been conscious of Dickens in any of my work, whereas I have often had to shoo away the tricksy ghost of Sterne or (dangerous and delectable phantom!) the will o' the wisp spirit of Anatole France. That, generally, Dickens has had a profound influence on my literary life there can be no doubt. But then so have Shakespeare, the Bible and Rabelais and other immortals whom I have chosen as intimate deities."

Robert Hichens has no personal recollections, naturally, but he pays his tribute.

"I don't know," he says, "that my work owes anything to that great man and unique genius. My life owes many hours of intense pleasure. I think his novels of intense value.

"I prefer 'David Copperfield,' as a whole, to the others. His humor seems to me undying. Can Mrs. Gamp, can Pecksniff, can Betsy Trotwood, Pickwick, Micawber, a hundred others die? I don't believe it.

"We pass, but they remain to move new worlds to laughter. I not only admire Dickens's work. I love it."

I. Zangwill tells how he first read Dickens.

"When I was 9 or 10," he says, "a schoolboy friend lent me a coverless book without a title page which I kept hidden in my locker and read in school hours with all the surreptitious sweetness of stolen bliss. The stories it contained seemed to me infinitely more vivid than any I had ever read, not excluding even those of 'The Boys of England.'

"There was a particularly haunting passage about tripe. Years afterward I discovered that the volume was by one Charles Dickens and was entitled 'Christmas Books.'"

Jerome K. Jerome thinks that he once met Dickens.

"I have the idea," he says, "that when a little lad I met and talked with Dickens one evening in Victoria Park. I made use of the incident in 'Paul Kelver.'

"I should doubt the possibility of any living reader not having been influenced in life and work by Dickens. To myself his humor appeals as strongly now as when at first it broadened and sweetened my outlook on life. 'David Copperfield' I have always considered his greatest book."

Andrew Lang gives utterances to some astonishing observations and wonders who buys Dickens's books.

"I never saw Dickens," he says, "and my life and work, such as they are, owe nothing to his influence so far as I am aware. The readers of our day of course do not see the point of his 'topical' jokes, and as he is not up to date I often wonder who the purchasers of his books can be; the same mystery surrounds the purchasers of Scott's. No doubt 'Pickwick' and 'David Copperfield' tie for first place among his works."

Frank Reynolds, the artist, confesses a big obligation to the influence of Dickens.

"I think," he says, "that any feeling I may have for character and character drawing is very largely due to reading Dickens as a boy.

"With regard to his humor, he certainly amuses me, but then I've grown up with him, as it were, and this no doubt makes a difference. People who find him laborious and out of date appear to forget that he is still the source of a good deal of modern humor. Of all his books I prefer 'Pickwick,' though the early part of 'Copperfield' strikes me as his finest work."

Women as Recruiting Agents.

From the London Evening Standard.

A voucher for a pair of gloves or an article of the value of 2 shillings 6 pence or cash is being offered for each recruit enlisted by a woman during the Territorial week at Kingston-on-Thames which begins on Saturday, for bringing up the headquarter companies of the Sixth East Surrey Regiment to full strength.

MAKING OF "OLIVER TWIST."

Dickens's Own Comments on the Progress of the Book.

In connection with the play made out of "Oliver Twist" as one of the events of the Dickens centenary it is interesting to know that the novelist himself always thought this book possessed unusually good dramatic possibilities. He offered it first to Yates and then to Macready, intending to do the dramatizing himself, but his plan was never carried out. Many dramatic versions of "Oliver Twist" were put upon the stage in his lifetime, but none that met with his satisfaction.

Dickens was only 26 when this book was published, and as his son has pointed out, it was produced in circumstances of extraordinary mental strain and activity. "Pickwick" was not yet completed when the first half of "Oliver Twist" was already written, and before the latter was completed "Nicholas Nickleby" had been six months in progress.

At the same time Dickens was editor of *Bentley's Miscellany* and was at work on the biography of Grimaldi. It was at this time that a doubt sprang up as to whether he had not exhausted his resources.

"Indications are not wanting," said the *Quarterly Review*, "that the particular vein of humor which has hitherto yielded such attractive metal is worked out. If he persists much longer it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell his fate—he has risen like a rocket and he will come down like a stick."

It was in reference to this article that Dickens wrote to Forster, his friend and chosen biographer, in November, 1837: "I hope to do great things with Nancy. If I can work out the idea I have formed of her I think I may defy Mr. —— and all his works."

Every allusion he made to the progress of the story shows how absorbed Dickens became in the character he was creating.

"Hard at work still," he wrote to Forster soon after. "Nancy is no more. I showed what I had done to Kate last night, who is in an unspeakable 'state,' from which and my own impression I auger well. When I have sent Sikes to the devil, I must have yours."

A few weeks later he was again writing: "No, no, don't let us ride to-morrow, not having yet disposed of the Jew, who is such an out and outer that I don't know what to make of him."

But it was not more than a month before Dickens had evolved a fit way to round off the career of Fagin and he wrote to Forster one evening toward the close of September: "Come and sit here and read, or work, or do something, while I write the last chapter of Oliver."

When the book was published the *Quarterly Review* renewed its criticisms and accused the author of aiding and abetting those "whose aim is to degrade the national mind by a series of misrepresentations which must familiarize the rising generation with the haunts, deeds, language and characters of the very dregs of the community." But the point in the article which especially roused Dickens to a spirited retort was the assertion that the portrait of Nancy was "contrary to the laws of human nature and experience everywhere, and especially in England."

"It is useless," he said in reply to this criticism, "to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seem natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. It is true. Every man who has watched these melancholy shades of life knows it to be so.

"Suggested to my mind long ago—long before I dealt in fiction—by what I often saw and read of in actual life around me, I have for years tracked it through many profligate and noisome ways and found it still the same. From the first introduction of that poor wretch to her laying her bloody head upon the robber's breast, there is not one word exaggerated or overwrought. It is emphatically God's truth, for it is the truth.

"He leaves in such depraved and miserable breasts the hope yet lingering behind; the last fair drop of water at the bottom of the dried up, weed choked well. It invokes the best and worst shades of our common nature; much of its ugliest hues, and something of its most beautiful; it is a contradiction, an anomaly, an apparent impossibility, yet it is the truth. I am glad to have it doubted, for in that circumstance I find sufficient assurance that it needed to be told."

Girl Owns Engagement Ring.

Blairsville correspondence Pittsburg Dispatch.

Justice of the Peace Geib has decided that a girl owns her engagement rings, whether or not they lead to her marriage with the man who presents them. Miss Josephine Graham and Charles Vachal became engaged to be married two years ago. Vachal presented a diamond ring to his fiancee, following this with another ring later.

Vachal some time ago asked for the rings, promising to return them at her request, as she did not consider the engagement broken. Miss Graham later requested the return of the rings, but Vachal is alleged to have refused them.

Suit for their recovery was brought by the girl. At the hearing before Justice Geib the rings were returned to the young woman and Vachal paid the costs of the suit.